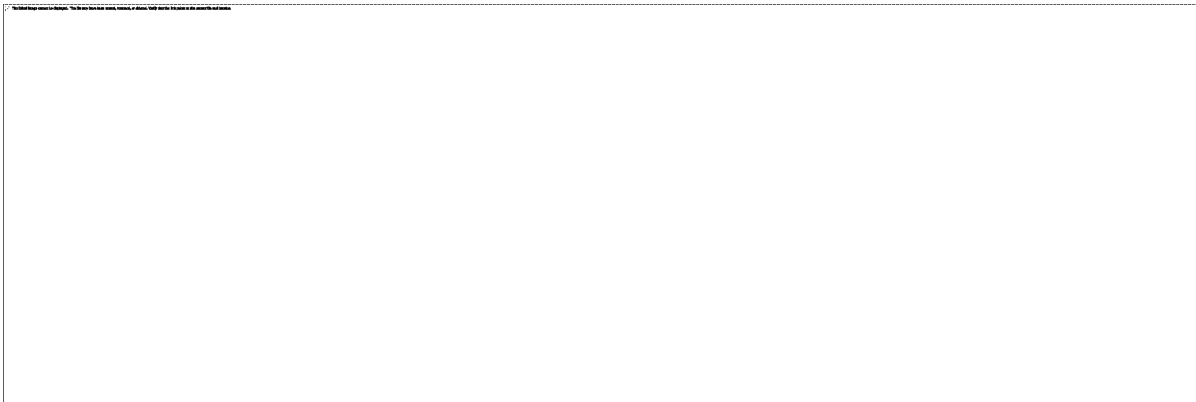
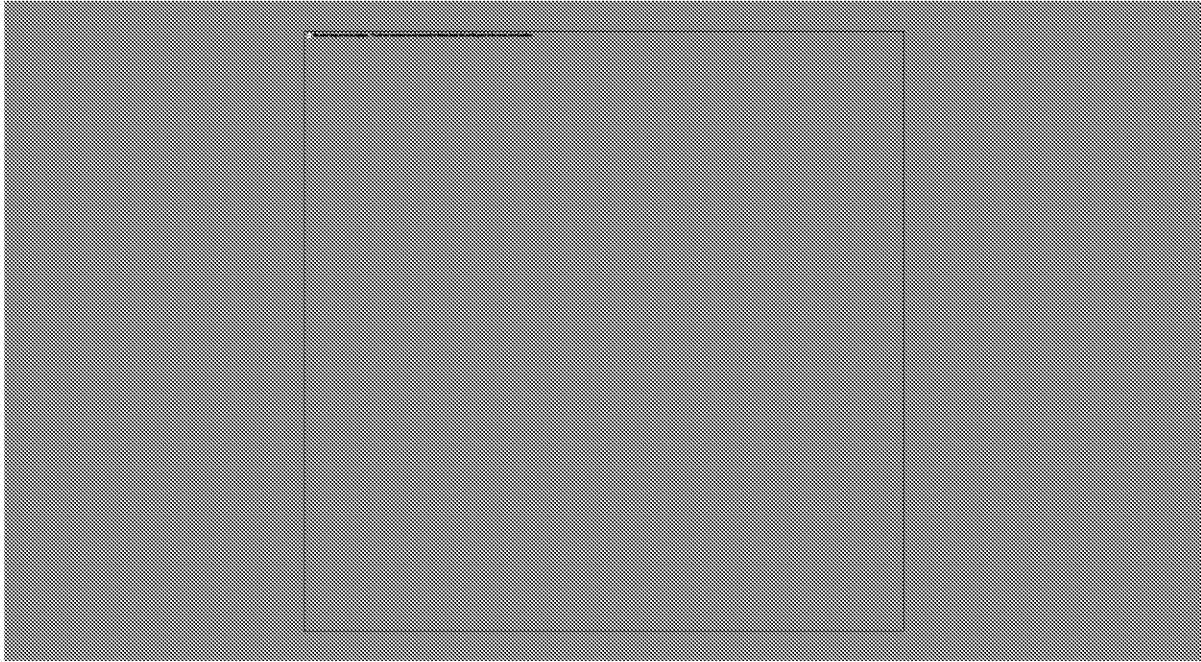


Message

From: Your Team at Save the Sound [info@savethesound.org]
Sent: 1/9/2023 10:15:35 PM
To: Williamson, Anahita [Williamson.Anahita@epa.gov]
Subject: Weekly Update: Legislative Agendas for CT & NY, young climate activists honored, and more



Welcome to your weekly environmental newsletter! We aim to bring you environmental stories that are relevant to YOU every week, along with action opportunities, upcoming events, and beautiful photos from around the region. Want to keep everything you see here going? [Consider a gift to Save the Sound.](#)



Our environmental justice specialist Alex Rodriguez (left) connected on the first day of the new Connecticut legislative session with state representatives Joe Gresko (121st District), Maria Horn (64th), and Mary Mushinsky (85th).

Opening Day in Albany and Hartford

To a baseball fan, they are the two most hopeful words in the English language: Opening Day. They signal the arrival of a new 162-game season, and optimism abounds.

It's no different in the world of that other venerable American institution, representative government. When Opening Day arrived last Wednesday in Hartford, and a promising new 154-day session got underway, Alex Rodriguez, our environmental justice specialist, was there, waiting in an area of the State Capitol roped off for advocates and lobbyists to throw out his ceremonial first pitches to passing legislators.

"It was very chummy at the legislature today," said Alex, who over the course of a long day was able to shake a few hands, take a few pictures, pass out a few fact sheets, and plant a few seeds about a piece of legislation he'll be pushing for. "I came to promote a stronger environmental justice law for Connecticut. What we're asking is for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Siting Council to develop a procedure to deny new affecting facilities – such as gas plants, incinerators, sewage treatment plants – if there's already a heavy disproportionate burden of affecting facilities in state-identified environmental justice communities."

It was a promising start to session season, if for no reason other than Alex was able to be there in person. The Capitol and Legislative Office Building are once again open to the public, enabling our on-staff experts a level of face-to-face access unavailable since the start of the pandemic. In the coming weeks and months, Save the Sound will have a regular presence in Hartford, advocating for climate accountability, greener buildings and transportation, clean water funding, reducing plastics and toxins, and more.

"We have a robust and ambitious agenda this session that covers our most urgent environmental concerns," said Denise Stranko, our vice president of programs. "We're looking forward to working with state leaders on legislation that moves us closer to clean water and air and a more resilient Connecticut."

The new legislative session also began last Wednesday in New York (though it runs 155 days, ending on June 8, one day later than Connecticut), and we're looking forward to hear what Governor Kathy Hochul says when she delivers her State of the State address on Tuesday, Jan. 10, at 1:00 p.m. Our legislative agenda in Albany includes "resilient coastlines and communities, safe drinking water, modernized infrastructure, environmental justice, protected wildlife habitats, upgraded parks, clean energy, and, of course, the defense of existing environmental laws and protections," said David Ansel, our regional director of water protection, who looks forward to close working relationships with longtime and newly elected state senators and assemblypersons.

With the legislative process underway in Connecticut and New York, it's Game On for Save the Sound and our supporters. Stay tuned all spring for ways to make your voice heard.

CT Loses Dedicated State Representative

On Wednesday, Quentin "Q" Williams was sworn in for a third term in the Connecticut General Assembly. After leaving Governor Ned Lamont's inaugural ball in the early morning hours of Thursday, the state representative from Middletown was killed in an automobile accident on Route 9, the victim of a wrong-way collision. The State Capitol was closed on Thursday and Friday last week and its flag was flown at half-mast to honor Rep. Williams.

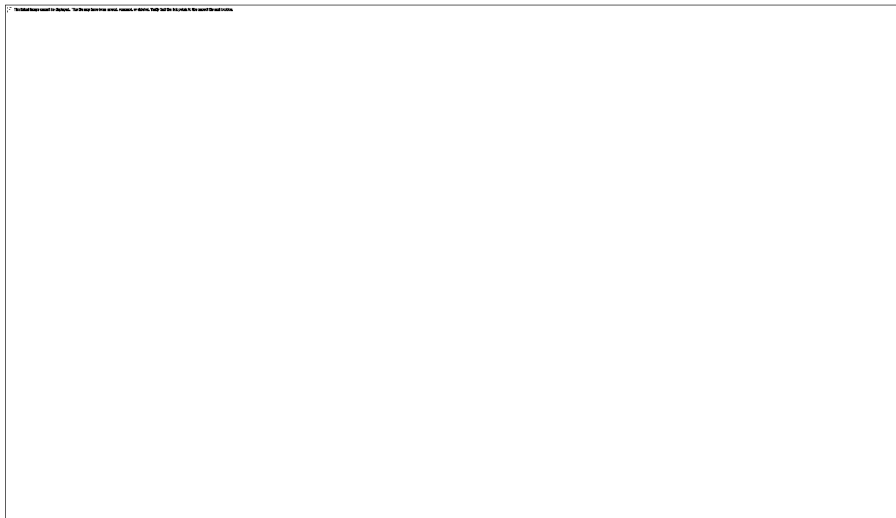
"Q was a champion for the people of Middletown and Connecticut's natural beauty," said environmental justice specialist Alex Rodriguez, who got to know Rep. Williams early in his career. "We are saddened by his passing and send love and strength to his family and loved ones during this heartbreaking time. Rest in peace, Q."

Gov. Hochul Signs Legislation Reducing Cumulative Impacts of Pollution on Disadvantaged Communities in NYS

On New Year's Eve, New York Governor Kathy Hochul signed S.8830/A.2103D, landmark environmental justice legislation that ensures cumulative impacts are taken into consideration in the State's environmental permitting processes when potentially polluting facilities seek permits in disadvantaged communities. The signing of this bill follows New Jersey's groundbreaking legislation signed in 2020, an effort we've also been working with advocates and legislators to replicate in Connecticut.

Read more in the [press release](#) from our ally, WE ACT for Environmental Justice.

Young Climate Activists Honored with Eco Advocate Awards from Save the Sound



Katharine "Kat" Morris (left) and Josh Koppel were honored with our Eco Advocate Awards for their work in 2022.

In 2021, we established the Youth Eco Advocacy Corps to partner with young environmental activists across the region. These emerging leaders meet monthly to learn advocacy skills, hone their stories, and take action together for a more sustainable future.

The Eco Advocate Award is an award we bestow to individuals under age 30 in recognition of their commitment to advancing a healthy future for the Long Island Sound region. This past year, we selected two awardees for the Eco Advocate Award in recognition of their advocacy and commitment to building resilient communities. Those awardees are Katharine "Kat" Morris and Josh Koppel.

Kat and Josh, your advocacy for your communities moves us. We thank you for your dedication to Youth Eco Advocacy Corps and the movement at large!

[Read more about the awardees here.](#)

Quick Links

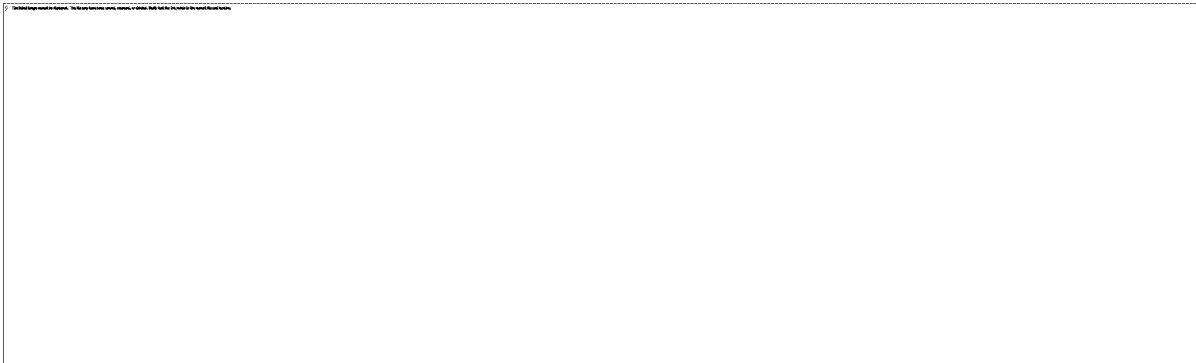
- "Congress gives support for Plum Island preservation in \$1.7 trillion omnibus bill," [CT Insider](#)
- More words of support for this step forward in "Good News for Plum Island," [East Hampton Star](#)
- Our region's senators and congresspeople came through for our waters, too! Read more in our press release: [Save the Sound Applauds Federal Funding Boost for Long Island Sound Study](#)
- Residents of Bridgeport, Stratford, and New Haven: Please help identify local needs by taking this [Survey on Climate Vulnerability and Environmental Injustice](#) from our partners at Seaside Sounds Club.
- A fun cartoon explanation of the problems with plastic pollution in our waters, from [Future Frogmen](#)
- In case you missed it: See highlight from 2022 in [our Year in Review blog post](#), and [a special New Year's video message](#) from our staff!

Upcoming Events

- "[Hartford Behind the Scenes: How the CT Legislative Session Works](#)," Monday, Jan. 9, 6:00 p.m.
- "[Collaborative Solutions for Clean Water in Long Island Sound](#)," Thursday, Jan. 12, 12:00 p.m., featuring our Nicole Davis on New Haven bioswales and Peter Linderoth on bay grades.
- "[Albany Behind the Scenes: A Webinar on the 2023 Legislative Session](#)," Friday, Jan. 13, 12:00 p.m.

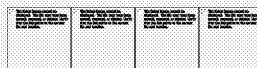
Find up-to-date details on all our events [on our website](#).

Photo of the Week



Rich Maddona captured these incredible images of the first sunrise and sunset of 2023. Left: frozen saltmarshes in Guilford, CT, at sunrise. Right: New York City and New Jersey at sunset. Follow [@RMadPhoto](#) on Twitter for more of Rich's images of our region.

Would you like your photo to be featured in an upcoming issue? Send it to us at info@savethesound.org.



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